



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Western Family Forum

October 25-27, 2024

Delta Bessborough, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Program as of March 25, 2024. Program subject to change.

Day 1 – Friday October 25th

3:00–5:00 pm

Room Check-in
Forum Registration

5:45 pm

Welcome Dinner

7:30 pm

Reflections Ceremony: Honouring our Families - Past and Present

Day 2 – Saturday October 26th

7:30-8:30 am

Breakfast

8:45 am

Opening Session: Welcome

9:00-9:30 am

Keynote Speaker: The View from Here

9:30 - 9:45 am

Coffee Break

Each worker and family member who has been affected by a workplace tragedy is a thread in the quilt of life. Each thread, by itself, cannot stand alone, but when woven together provides strength. Although we are individuals, we are also connected in the fabric of life.

The 2024 Western Family Forum has been generously supported by:



Day 2 – Saturday October 26th

Workshops

9:45 am -12:15 pm

Masks of grief and loss for new participants

Karen Lapierre Pitts, Family Support Manager, Threads of Life

In this session, you'll understand how we wear various masks to get through our daily lives and what we can do to safely take off those masks to deal with our journey. Whether your situation involves the loss of life, a traumatic injury or occupational disease, you will benefit from the insights gained in this session.

You'll have a short period of time to share with the other participants a piece of your family story and what brought you here. This session will help you develop a connection to other family members attending the family forum and give you a more meaningful experience.

Please note: this workshop is highly recommended for family members attending their first family forum. Members of one family are highly encouraged to attend different sessions so that each is able to share their own story. **The session will be limited to a maximum of 14 participants.**

The Many Faces of Grief

Darrin Parkin, Spiritual Care Clinician

"To love is to grieve". In this workshop, we will explore the various ways in which we grieve, the types of grief, the seasons of grief, as well as the complexities of grief. We will explore questions like "does grief come to an end?" and "do men and women grieve differently?"

Living with Chronic Pain

Dwayne Cameron, Counsellor/Consultant

Chronic pain is a unique and personal experience that can vary from person to person & family to family. Those who are living with chronic pain often feel they are dealing with issues that are invisible to others- and therefore face a range of physical, emotional and social challenges. We will discuss various ways to manage pain and improve your quality of life from a holistic perspective.

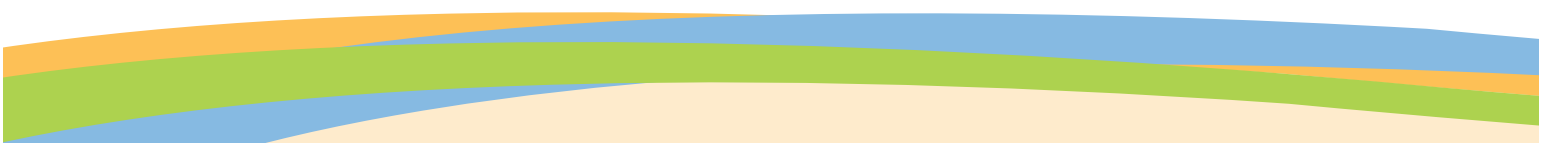
Self-Care Vs Self-Soothing

Chalaine Senger, Mental Health Worker

Real self-care is messy and unpredictable, and sometimes it's not all that fun, so instead, we sometimes choose to self-soothe. What is the difference? This workshop will discuss the impact of choosing feel-good habits versus sustainable habits for everyday life.

12:15-1:15 pm

Networking Lunch



Day 2 – Saturday October 26th

Workshops

1:30-4:00 pm

Don't Stay in Dark Places

Jennifer Yasinowski, Director of Education and Outreach, Caring Hearts

Finding Hope and Humour," Jennifer Yasinowski, from Caring Hearts, discusses pathways of resilience for families navigating loss due to workplace accidents. Jennifer will explore the transformative power of resilience, both personal and vicarious. Attendees will gain tools for self-care and self-awareness, fostering healing and a renewed sense of purpose amidst grief. Join us as we journey from darkness to light, finding strength in hope and humour.

Finding Your Song – Using Music for Well-being

Ruth Eliason, Certified Music Therapist

Music is all around us: birdsong, advertising jingle, road-trip anthem, instant dance party. What if we used what we love about music to help us grow and thrive? This workshop will offer a variety of ways to explore how music can affect our health in a holistic way. Participants will have the chance to try group drumming, singing, creative movement, writing and relaxation exercises. No musical experience is necessary. Come as you are to find your song!

Finding The Power In Our Stories

Sarah Wheelan, Communications Coordinator, Threads of Life

Storytelling is in our human DNA, and in the DNA of Threads of Life too. We believe sharing our losses will lead to healing and contribute to prevention. But how do we find the power in our stories? In this session, we'll examine why stories are powerful and how your grief story fits into your bigger story. With a focus on both telling and listening, we will tap into oral storytelling, writing, and even a little artmaking.

The Strength of a Thousand

Darrin Parkin, Spiritual Care Clinician

In this workshop, we will explore the role of family caregivers who support the family system after a tragedy as well as caregivers who care for a loved one with a long-term illness or injury. We will ask, "what keeps us going?", "what is caregiver burnout and what can we do about it?" and "what is the impact of caregiving on family dynamics?"

2:45 - 3:00 pm

Coffee Break

4:00-6:00 pm

Free Time

6:00-8:00 pm

Dinner followed by Volunteer Recognition & Opportunities Presentation

Threads of Life is extremely fortunate to have many tremendous volunteers. This presentation will recognize our volunteers and highlight some of the ways that you too can volunteer and support Threads of Life.



Day 3 – Sunday October 27th

7:30-8:45 am

Breakfast

8:45-9:00 am

Please check out of your room. The Front Desk can hold your luggage if needed.

Workshops

9:15 -11:30 am

How Grief Affects Us, and How to Live with Grief

Jennifer Yasinowski, Director of Education and Outreach, Caring Hearts

Jennifer Yasinowski of Caring Hearts leads an insightful exploration into the profound ways grief reshapes our lives. Departing from conventional narratives of overcoming grief, Jennifer delves into living with its enduring impact, offering strategies for adaptation and growth. Through shared experiences and practical wisdom, attendees will discover resilience in embracing change, finding solace in the journey of living alongside grief.

Using Art to Unlock Creativity and Improve Emotional Wellness

Helen Stirling, Mental Health Therapist (Registered Art Therapist, Registered Social Worker, EMDR Certified Therapist)

A brief description of art therapy will be followed by a directed mindfulness/self-nurturing exercise. Participants will then be invited to create their own art with the focus on the art-making process rather than on the finished product. A variety of media will be provided.

Artistic skills are not needed. This safe, welcoming, encouraging environment allows you to express your emotions creatively and have fun.

Hope, Love, Fear and the Shawshank Redemption

Darrin Parkin, Spiritual Care Clinician

“I don’t like it here. I’m tired of being afraid all the time. I’ve decided not to stay. I doubt they’ll kick up any fuss. Not for an old crook like me.” -Brooks Hatlen in the Shawshank Redemption.

In this workshop we will explore the themes of hope, fear, and love by taking a look at three main characters in the movie “the Shawshank Redemption”. In the aftermath of the loss of a loved one or the impact of workplace injury, how can we adjust to a life lived with love and hope rather than fear?

10:30-10:45 am

Coffee break

11:30-1:00 pm

Closing Lunch and departure at 1:00 pm

Safe travels home and hope to see you again next year!

Save the date: October 24-26, 2025